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News of the Society

Maine Historical Society

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MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 12, Number two

Fall, 1972

Published quarterly at 485 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04111

NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

Winter Library Hours: For the benefit of students who live at a distance from Portland, and for members of the Society who are unable to use the Library because of a five-day work week, the Society Library is open from 12:00 noon until 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, October through May, *except for the last two Saturdays in December.*

The Wadsworth-Longfellow House Store will be open for the first time this year at Christmas time. Hours will be 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. during the week immediately preceding Christmas only, Monday, December 18, through Friday, December 22. The store stocks a variety of appealing books and modestly priced handcrafted gifts. All items sold contribute directly to the upkeep and operation of the House.

Christmas Card: For the many members who have been enamored with the Society's oil painting by Charles E. Becket: *Winter Scene Near Portland of Dr. Cummings Driving His Fast Horse Jane Medora*; a Christmas Card has been printed using a color reproduction of the painting with the simple inscription, "Merry Christmas" on the inside fold. These cards are available at the Society for 10¢ each, or \$1.00 a dozen. Prepaid mail orders will be honored in lots of a dozen or more at \$1.25 per dozen to pay for third class postage. All proceeds contribute to the Wadsworth-Longfellow House.

Staff Changes: Mrs. Shirley L. Barnes, *Registrar and Secretary* for the past six years, resigned her position effective October first in order to move to the State of Florida. Mrs. Barnes's helpful and cheerful disposition created the impression that we

were an intimate Society of 100 people rather than 1,500. She will be sadly missed. Some idea of the extent of Mrs. Barnes's activities can be appreciated by the announcement that not one, but two positions were created in an attempt to fill the vacancy left by her resignation.

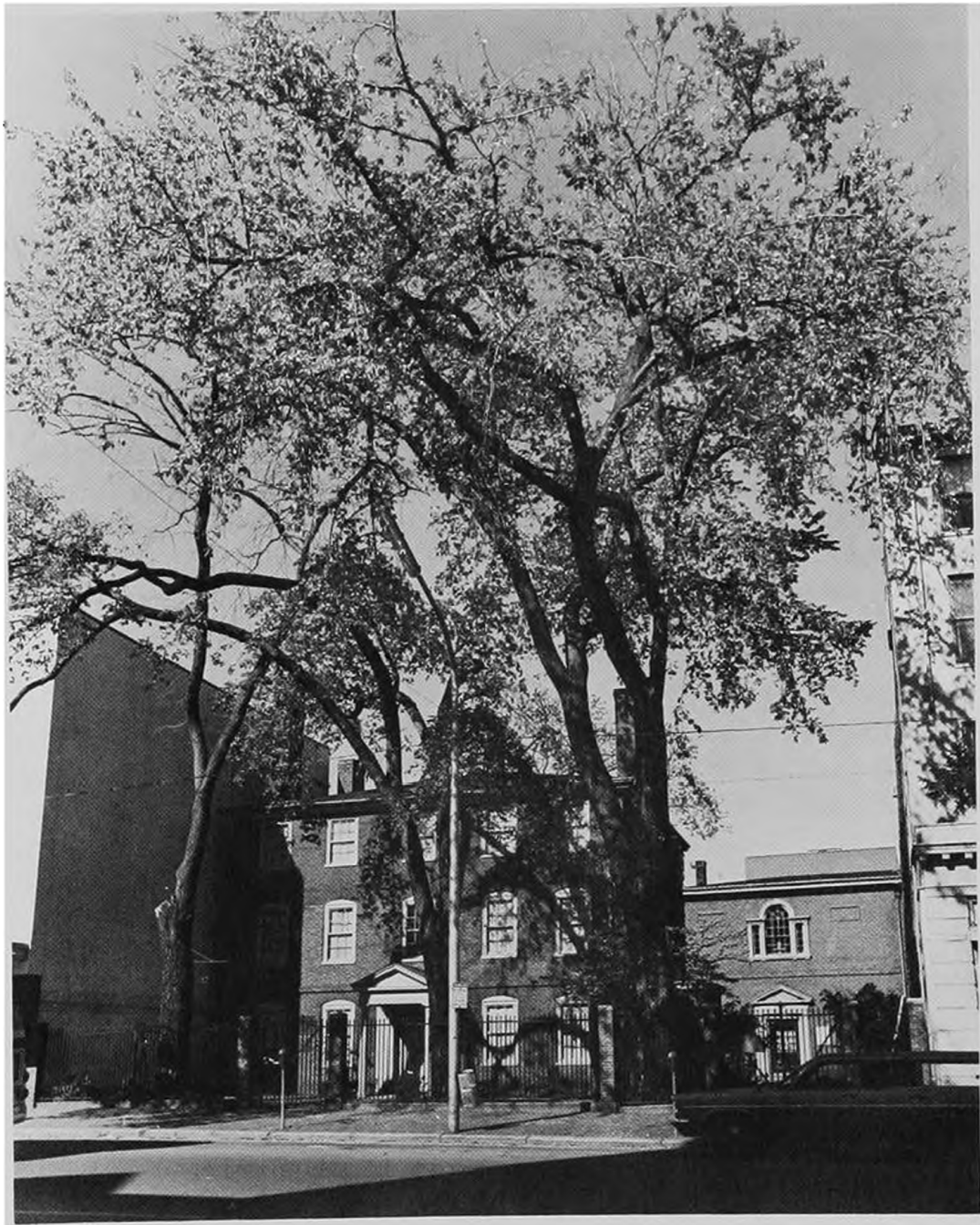
Mrs. Sigrid P. Austin, of South Portland, was engaged in September for the position of *Administrative Secretary*. Mrs. Austin's responsibilities include all record keeping necessary for an ever enlarging membership, design and typing of the *Newsletter* and other special Society publications, and furnishing clerical assistance for the director's office and the Standing Committee.

Miss Hannah R. Adams, a recent graduate of Bates College, joined the Staff in October in the new position of *Registrar/Curator*. This position was made possible by a recent generous bequest from the estate of Mrs. Grace B. Morton of Portland. Miss Adams will be responsible for the care and maintenance of the museum collections in the Wadsworth-Longfellow House and in the Society Building and Library. In addition, Miss Adams will have full responsibility for operating the Wadsworth-Longfellow House during the summer months in close cooperation with the House Committee. Behind-the-scenes planning during the winter months will include detailed preparations for a training and reading program for all Hostesses, and the revision of some of the existing materials used in the House.

The Wadsworth-Longfellow House was open four months this summer, June through September. The number of visitors, some 7,246 was down considerably from last year's total of 9,345 visitors for the same period. Happily, the City of Portland resumed its annual grant of \$1,600 for operation of the House which, along with a number of private contributions this year, helped greatly to lighten our financial distress.

In cooperation with the *Tate House* (1755), the *McLellan-Sweat Mansion* (1800), and the *Victoria Mansion* (*Morse-Libby House*, 1859), the Wadsworth-Longfellow House Committee produced a combined brochure

Last Look at the Elms



entitled, *A Century of Historic Portland Houses*. If all goes well, we hope that it will be possible to introduce a combined ticket to the four houses, all Registered National Historic Landmarks, in the very near future.

The familiar elm trees in front of the House on Congress Street have been lost to Dutch elm disease. The Society has had them treated continuously since 1935, but the battle has been lost. The trees will have to be removed. In addition, the last remaining elm in the Longfellow Garden in back of the House is being removed by the Longfellow Garden Club this winter.

New Accessions: It is remarkable, after all these years, how bits and pieces of furniture and memorabilia from the Wadsworth and Longfellow families find their way back to their old home on Congress Street. During the past summer, a particularly charming piece, a baby chair used by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was presented to the Society by Mr. Warren W. Mansfield of West Hartford, Connecticut, and his brother Lewis Pierce Mansfield of St. Helena, California. The chair had been in the Mansfield family for years and had belonged to their mother, Mrs. Warren W. Mansfield, who was the daughter of Lewis Pierce, whose uncle, George Washington Pierce married Anne Longfellow, last occupant of the Wadsworth-Longfellow House.

The Mansfield brothers remember Mrs. Anne Longfellow Pierce well. When they were small boys, living in Portland, Aunt Anne was "at home" to them after church on Sundays. Mr. Lewis Pierce Mansfield of California has kindly furnished the following recollection of Mrs. Pierce, about one year before her death, at which time the Wadsworth-Longfellow House came to the Society:

The year was 1900, the scene Portland, Maine. I was six and my brother Warren was seven. And the woman we both loved was a mere ninety. She was Mrs. Anne Longfellow Pierce, favorite sister of the poet, Henry Wadsworth



Longfellow. She had married our great, great uncle, George W. Pierce in 1832, who had died a few years thereafter. He was a close friend and classmate of the poet at Bowdoin College.

Aunt Anne never remarried, but stayed in mourning for her George throughout her long life. They say that she never dined out after his death.

One day, this Victorian lady in black invited Warren and me for a ride in her coach drawn by two noble black horses. The dark interior of the coach had lovely things for little boys to meddle with, such as mirrors, tassels, fans, speaking tubes, etc. Aunt Anne told the coachman to drive through the pleasant parks of Portland, especially Deering's Oaks. "Giddap!" and we were off to a slow trot. While the old lady dozed on her cushions, Warren and I meddled, what fun!

When the ride was over, Aunt Anne kissed us and gave us each a sugar plum because, she said, "You have been very good boys." We wondered about that, but took the sugar plums anyway, for we knew that she loved us and we loved her.

The dear lady died the next year, 1901, a few days after the death of Queen Victoria whom she and many others of that generation admired, even revered. Such women might be called stuffy today, but they had qualities that are forever enduring; dignity and virtue. Anyway, I shall never forget Aunt Anne.

The baby chair has been placed in the "Rainy Day Room" where it will be on view for visitors next summer.

NEW MEMBERS

FROM MAINE Augusta: Mr. Andrews B. Campbell, Mr. James H. Mundy Bangor: Mr. Richard D. Kelly, Jr. Bingham: Mrs. Everett Lidstone Cumberland Foreside: Miss Marjorie A. Duval Edgecomb: Mr. Thacher Jenney Farmington: Mrs. Gregory D. MacDonald Limerick: Mr. Daniel E. Gilpatrick New Gloucester: Mr. & Mrs. Donald B. McGuire, Jr. North Edgecomb: Mr. Alan Mast Ogunquit: Mr. Robert A. East Portland: Mr. James C. Agnew III, Mrs. Christopher M. Cox, Mrs. Clinton T. Loveitt, Mrs. Virginia Robertson Prouts Neck: Mr. John G. Bartol Rumford: Dr. & Mrs. P. B. Aucoin Waterville: Mrs. Sam Pachowsky Westbrook: Mr. John E. Ham, Jr. Wiscasset: Mr. Cleveland A. Page.

Other States CALIFORNIA San Francisco: Mr. Kevin T. McGann CONNECTICUT Pomfret: Mr. Henry Sewall Woodbridge ILLINOIS Evanston: Mr. John L. Butler KANSAS Topeka: Mrs. Marilyn L. Wichers NEW HAMPSHIRE: Lancaster: Mr. Stuart B. Lord Newington: Miss Wilhelmina K. Russell NEW YORK Syracuse: Mr. Wilfred Arthur Cote, III VERMONT Burlington: Mr. Kenneth R. Dresser.

CANADA Beaconsfield, Prov. Quebec: Mr. Ralph J. Conrad.

150TH ANNIVERSARY FUND

A number of large contributions and a sizeable number of smaller ones have boosted the total number of contributors to the *One Hundred-Fiftieth Anniversary*

Fund to 428, an increase of 50 since August first, when the Committee reported in the *Newsletter* the names of the donors to date. The Committee hopes that by the end of the anniversary year the number of contributors will reach 500 which is roughly a third of the membership.

In the meantime the Standing Committee has authorized the original architects of Nichols Hall, Wadsworth, Boston, Dimick, Mercer and Weatherill to proceed with the plans for the second story stacks, making an estimate of the cost, with the necessary modification of climate controls. When this is done a low cost brochure will be prepared for use in solicitation to a number of foundations from whom we hope to get the balance needed to complete the project. At present we have a total of \$12,359.25. While the year ends on December 31, the Committee will still welcome contributions after the anniversary has passed.

Elizabeth Ring
Chairman

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE
150TH ANNIVERSARY FUND
(To November 1, 1972)

Mr. Charles F. Adams, Auburn
Mr. Constantine Albans, Bangor
Mr. Hayden L. V. Anderson, Gardiner
Mr. & Mrs. David Astor, Portland
Mrs. Malcolm Barto, South Windham
Mr. Henry A. Benoit, Portland
Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Butler, Farmington
Mr. Richard L. Castner, Fancher, New York
Mr. Guy J. Crocker, North Brunswick, New Jersey
Mr. Arthur E. Demmons, Skowhegan
Mrs. Josephine H. Detmer, Portland
Mrs. Jesse A. Drew, West Falmouth, Massachusetts
Miss Geneva Drinkwater, Portland
Miss E. Marie Estes, Portland
Mr. Byron Fairchild, Alexandria, Virginia

Mrs. William F. Foden, Cape Elizabeth
Miss Edith Greene, South Portland
Mr. Beniah C. Harding, Thomaston
Mr. Robert Hale, Washington D.C.
Miss Hester R. Harris, Portland
Mr. Charles U. Hatch, Kennebunk
Mr. Richard Hede, Stockholm
Mr. Merton G. Henry, Portland
Miss Christine Holden, Lewiston
Mr. H. Draper Hunt, III, South Portland
Mr. Harold M. Lawrence, Portland
Mr. Charles A. Joy, Beaverdam, Virginia
Mr. & Mrs. Martial Maling, Portland
Mr. & Mrs. Paul E. Merrill, Cumberland Center
Mr. Nicholas Noyes, Kennebunkport
Miss Josephine C. Poor, Augusta
Mr. Harry W. Rowe, Lewiston
Mrs. Benjamin Sanderson, Portland
Mrs. Carl L. A. Schmidt, Berkeley, California
Mr. Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Portland
Mrs. John B. Sloggett, Cape Elizabeth
Miss Alice Stewart, Orono
Mr. Richard C. Storey, South Hamilton, Massachusetts
Miss Alice M. Stott, Portland
Mr. Sewall C. Strout, Portland
Mrs. Ralph M. Trecartin, Phillips
Mr. & Mrs. J. Weston Walch, Portland
Miss Brenda T. White, Brunswick
Mr. Henry Sewall Woodbridge, Pomfret, Connecticut
Mr. Willard Woodman, Cape Elizabeth

*NEWS OF OTHER SOCIETIES
AND INSTITUTIONS*

Maine League of Historical Societies and Museums: The Maine League, consisting now of 130 member institutions, held their annual meeting at Bates College in Lewiston this year. All officers and trustees were re-elected and President William B. Miller introduced the League's newly appointed project director, Marius B. Peladeau, who spoke on the topic, "New Directions." Mr. Peladeau is a graduate of St. Michael's College in Vermont, and holds master's degrees from Boston and Georgetown Universities. Presently, he is administrative assistant to U. S. Congressman Joseph P. Vigorito in Washington. Mr. Peladeau will be on the Maine scene in December.

Maine State Archives: In mid-August, the Maine State Archives brought to virtual completion the transfer of Maine's judicial records from County Court houses throughout the State to the new Archives facility in Augusta. Some 12000 cubic feet of material, comprising Court of Common Pleas, District, Superior and Supreme Judicial Court records dating from the 17th century to an initial cut-off date of 1930 will now be housed, together with the records of the former Municipal Courts, in one central location in Augusta.

These judicial records represent some of Maine's oldest public records, and as such, contain a rich and hitherto untapped body of economic and sociological information in addition to their obvious judicial value. They also bear unexplored historical and functional relationships with other State Agencies which are also housed and preserved in the Maine State Archives.

Raymond H. Fogler Library: A list of 84 manuscript collections housed in the Special Collections Division of the Fogler Library at the University of Maine, Orono, has recently been issued by Mrs. Frances C. Hartgen, Head of the division. Although there are no indications concerning the size of each collection, brief descriptions are included. This is the first comprehensive listing we have seen. The Special Col-

lections Division is open: Monday - Thursday, 8 A.M.- 9 P.M.; and on Friday 8 A.M. - 5 P.M. It is closed Saturday and Sunday.

Maine State Library: The second edition of *Special Subject Resources in Maine, 1972*, compiled by Mrs. Louise Hazelton, has just been published by the Maine State Library. It contains an accurate, up-to-date listing of the special collections in 108 Maine libraries with a good subject index. Researchers, even those who feel confident that they are fully aware of library resources in Maine, will find this publication indispensable, and will no doubt find some surprises. The directory is the result of a Federal Grant and is not available for distribution to individuals; however, it can be consulted in any of the research, public, or school libraries in the State.

The Penobscot Marine Museum: The Penobscot Marine Museum at Searsport, has issued a 28 page pamphlet listing its Logbooks and Sea Journals, compiled by Wayne M. O'Leary, former curator. The pamphlet is basically an inventory of 62 manuscript items including the logbooks or sea journals for 74 vessels, 30 of which hail from Maine. Though modest in size, the booklet is a model of helpfulness with multiple indexes for vessels, hailing ports, captains, trades, and a chronological index. Due to a short print, the pamphlet is not available to individuals, but may be consulted at most research libraries throughout the State. The Library at Penobscot Marine Museum is open by appointment and prior arrangement for use should be made with Richard V. Palmer, Director.

Maine Old Cemetery Association: Anyone who has copied inscriptions from the stones in any cemetery in Maine is requested to let Mrs. Charles Jackson, Route 1, North Vassalboro, 04962, know the name and location of the graveyard. If desired, she will make a few copies of the list for use in libraries and then return it unharmed to the sender.